THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir. A National Conference on Civil Aviation was held on 18.01.2008 at New Delhi. It was attended, amongst others, by some concerned Ministers and Chief Secretaries of States and Union Territories (UTs). The purpose was to sensitise the States/UTs regarding the various policies and programmes of the Government of India as well as to provide a forum to the States to project issues of their concern.

(b) Yes, Sir. As the Sales Tax (ST) on Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) is levied by State Government, there was a need to involve them in the discussions to consider its moderation.

(c) Yes, Sir. At present fuel cost accounts for almost 45 to 50% of the total operating cost of airlines.

(d) & (e) The response of the States was positive. So far Governments of Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Rajasthan (with some conditions) and Maharashtra (except at Mumbai and Pune airports) have reduced ST on ATF to 4%.

Naming of aircrafts

†4162. SHRI SATYAVRAT CHATURVEDI:
SHRI MOTILAL VORA:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Air India has decided its new planes to be named after States;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that Air India has decided to buy new planes; and

(d) if so, the number of new planes to be purchased and the amount to be spent thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Air India have decided to name the newly ordered B777 and B787 aircraft after the States of India in alphabetical order. The 8 B777 aircraft which have been received so far, have accordingly, been named as Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat and Haryana.

(c) and (d) Erstwhile Air India and Indian Airlines have ordered a total of 111 aircraft from M/s. Boeing and Airbus which are being delivered in phases upto 2011. The project cost is approximately Rs. 44,000 crore.

Offloading of passengers

4163. SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether he is aware of the incident on the 29 March, 2008 at the Mumbai Airport where a passenger was offloaded from the plane IX243 by one captain as reported in media, if so, the details thereof;

(b) if so, what action has been taken in this regard; and

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.